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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

2 April 1951

Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence

Subject: Reported Formation of an "International Volunteer
Army" in the Far East

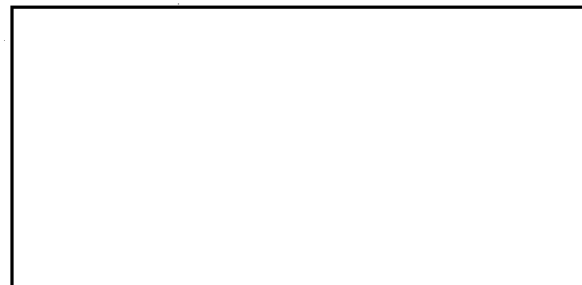
In SIE -1 we have estimated that current Soviet activities in the Far East indicate a serious possibility that there will be increased covert Soviet participation in the Korean fighting. A number of fragmentary pieces of evidence, while not conclusive, suggest that the USSR might sharply increase Communist combat capabilities in Korea while preserving the fiction of technical "neutrality."

a. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] indicate that Communist China and the USSR have held discussions on ways of reversing the present military trend in Korea. One of these reports states that a decision has been reached to form an "international volunteer army" [redacted] 25X1

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b. Aside from the question of whether the report of an "international volunteer army" is accurate, the plan outlined is a very plausible one for Soviet and Chinese leaders to adopt in one form or another at the present juncture. The introduction of Chinese Communist ground forces into the Korean war last fall, in an effort to salvage the venture after the original miscalculation of US reaction, has proven to be a failure, very largely because of the limited numbers so far committed, their inferior fire power and their lack of means to combat US air superiority. The Soviet leaders are now obliged to find some other alternative if they desire to gain the announced objective of the North Koreans and Chinese Communists. Since they probably consider that a direct and open Soviet assault on US forces and bases in the Far East might well set off a general war, probably involving a US atomic offensive against the USSR, the Soviet leaders would find it most advantageous to devise some method that would permit Soviet direction of operations and the introduction of Soviet fire power, air power, and perhaps even naval power (in the form of submarine and mine warfare) without almost automatically precipitating general war.

c. The concept of an "international volunteer army" would be useful to the USSR. The Chinese thus far committed are "volunteers." The US has not retaliated against China itself for this "volunteer" intervention in the Korean war. The new volunteer army could be made up of national units, but the command -- like the MacArthur command -- could be made responsible to a semi-unofficial committee or group such as the World Peace Partisans. They could even develop a new flag and insignia. The new organization and command could be announced in Peiping, Warsaw, or Berlin. The USSR could be openly asked to permit units to volunteer. In such circumstances the Soviet rulers might well reason that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the US to place the responsibility on Moscow clearly enough to justify and bring about a US attack on the USSR.

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